

Leesburg Standing Residential Traffic Committee Minutes of Monday, July 15, 2002

The Leesburg Standing Residential Traffic Committee met on Monday, July 15, 2002, in the Executive Conference Room of the Municipal Government Center, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Elizabeth Whiting, Chair
Wayne Henderson
Councilmember Mervin Jackson
Planning Commissioner Lyle Werner

Ric Knight
John Kurtin
Peggy Coleman

Town Staff Present

Mike Bomgardner
Calvin Grow
Wes Thompson
Nick Colonna
Marantha Edwards

Virginia Regional

Transportation Authority (VRTA)

Mark McGregor
Jack Blevins
John Ross

Citizens Present

Kelly Gower
Sandy Kane
Michelle Henning

Gabe Kelemen
Craig Lane
Robin Boyer

1. On motion by Lyle Werner, seconded by Calvin Grow, the minutes of the June 3, 2002, meeting was unanimously approved as presented.
2. Liz Whiting welcomed new Southwest quadrant member Peggy Coleman and asked everyone present to briefly introduce themselves and identify their roles with the Committee or reasons for being in attendance.

Mr. Jackson indicated that everyone had been appointed or reappointed to the Committee for two-year terms and the Council reiterated its desire for having resumes from all appointees. He said that Ms. Coleman's resume appeared to be the only one outstanding. Peggy Coleman indicated that she had e-mailed a resume to Judy Ahalt. Calvin Grow said he would check to see if it could be located. Peggy Coleman said she would send it again.

Mr. Jackson said he needed to get to a Board of Architectural Review meeting, but wanted the Committee to note that the Town Council had referred four topics to them and asked for a report by next Monday (July 22):

- a. *Kincaid Boulevard, S.E.* — Craig Lane's request that the speed limit be raised to 30 or 35 mph. (See item 14.)
- b. *Meade Drive, S.E.* — Michelle Henning's request for all-way stops at intersections with Hague Drive, S.W. and Harle Place, S.W. (See item 12)
- c. *VRTA* — Kelly Gower's request for restoration of Saturday on-request service. (See item 3.)
- d. *Silver Oaks*—request for all-way stops to discourage cut-through traffic.

3. *VRTA:* Mark McGregor reviewed the history of the *Saf-T-Ride program* and noted that June's figures showed another 10% increase in riders. Mr. McGregor identified things he thought could be done to tap the program's potential and solidify its use:
- (i) *Get the word out to the targeted users:* Mark McGregor suggested erecting 2' x 3' signs at the habitual crossing points, in English and Spanish, using the Saf-T-Bus graphic and logo, with a message to the effect of "Don't chance crossing on foot. Take the bus." He anticipated the signs could be produced for a total of \$400.00 to \$500.00 and said the funds would need to come from somewhere other than VRTA. He noted, however, that word needed to be gotten out in additional languages, as well, such as Ukrainian and the languages of the Balkan states, and that VRTA simply didn't have the capability of generating signs or brochures in those languages. Lyle Werner suggested that she might have a contact who could provide the necessary translation services and that producing the signs only in Spanish and English would make sense, if brochures in the additional languages could be made available at the signs.
 - (ii) *Fill the gap during which the bus doesn't run:* The Saf-T-Ride bus operates from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The survey taken by the Town showed some 35 out of 90 people crossed between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM. The Committee agreed that the target audience was likely to cross on their timetable, rather than the bus'. Mark McGregor said that based on the rule of thumb that it costs \$10,000.00 per year for bus service.
 - (iii) *Upgrade the barriers to crossing on foot:* Unless the trip is made substantially longer and/or more arduous, a would-be pedestrian isn't going to wait up to 15 minutes for a bus to arrive. Calvin Grow said that the Town was exploring the possibility of installing a wall or fencing on the west side of the By-Pass in the vicinity of the DMV that would be harder to breach but would also function as a visual amenity.
 - (iv) *Get the shelters placed and better signage installed:* Mark McGregor indicated that sitting bus shelters had proved to be a much more difficult process than expected. The County office building is the only approved location thus far. After noting the problems with other proposed locations—the site at Evans Ridge Apartments will present sight distance problems; the owner of the WalMart center is looking to get sidewalks rebuilt at the Town's expense—the Committee endorsed locating a shelter across Fort Evans Road, N.E. from the Evans Ridge Apartments entrance and another in the

vicinity of where the service road between the Shenandoah Building and the Mail Stop intersects Heritage Way, N.E.

Liz Whiting asked that Loudoun Transit continue to provide figures showing the locations generating rides and also whether the percentage of school-aged children was increasing. Mark McGregor offered to have the drivers collect data one week each month. Lyle Werner asked whether a letter similar to that sent to PTA and PTO groups could be sent for inclusion in an Evans Ridge Community newsletter.

Nick Colonna asked whether Marantha Edwards' "wayfinding" signage initiative might be able to help with the funding and design of signs. Liz Whiting recognized Marantha Edwards, who reported that the Town was in talks to finalize a contract with Frazier & Associates for the *Wayfinding Signage RFP*. She expects the contractor will be reviewing background materials and getting familiar with the Town's needs in August, then will conduct interviews with stakeholders in the process come September. Liz Whiting offered the Committee's assistance and asked Marantha Edwards to coordinate anything she needed from us through Calvin Grow.

Saturday service: Effective July 1, VRTA eliminated its Saturday on-request service because of the latest round in cuts in a United Way grant. Kelly Gower approached the Town Council because this gap created a hardship for her and for other regular users of the service. Mark McGregor indicated that the Saturday service could be resumed for a local share of \$5,500.00 and that the County resisted funding the service because it had cut its allocation to VRTA by \$6,000.00 during the budget process and Loudoun County didn't want to look like it was reversing itself. Kelly Gower noted that although Leesburg was funding one half of VRTA's local share, the on-request service was operating county-wide and was running within the Town for much less than 50% of its running time. Mark McGregor, Lyle Werner and Ric Knight noted that Leesburg residents didn't limit their traveling to the Town limits, but were among the people wanting to get to the hospital, Dulles Town Center and Lovettsville, for example. Liz Whiting said that she and Calvin Grow spoke with Phil Rodenberg at Mr. Jackson's request. Phil Rodenberg indicated that he felt the Town could fund either half or all of the request and that it would not come from the funds earmarked for traffic calming projects. He backed service within the Town limits, plus trips to and from the Hospital. Mark McGregor wanted to alert the Committee to what he sees as a likely move by The United Way to eliminate the grant altogether and that it would run an additional \$8,000.00 to keep the weeknight program going. Liz Whiting suggested that with enough lead time, within the regular budget process, VRTA might well find support for evening on-request service for the same Leesburg route.

On a motion by Lyle Werner, seconded by Ric Knight, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Town Council approve up to \$5,500.00 to permit VRTA to resume the Saturday on-request service within the Town limits and to and from the hospital. The Committee wanted the Council to be aware that by contrast with the weeknight service, in which a single bus must cover the entire county, this grant from the Town will greatly improve coverage within the Town during Saturday service hours.

4. *Sycolin Road, S.E. renaming:* Nick Colonna reported that the staff report to the Town Council is nearly complete for the proposal to rename segments of Sycolin Road, S.E. to “Old Sycolin Road, S.E.” from East Market Street to its terminus at the W & OD trail and to “Plaza Street, S.E.” from the present terminus of Plaza Street, S.E. at Gateway Drive, S.E. south to the Route 7/15 By-Pass. Liz Whiting indicated that she would try to appear at the Council work session (7:30 PM on August 12) or would ask Wayne Henderson to, since this originated with the Residential Traffic Task Force report in September, 2000.
5. *Country Club Drive, S.W.:* Mike Bomgardner reported that he double-checked his traffic study results and they showed an average speed of 29.2 mph, which is consistent with the Smart Trailer results showing an average of 28.05 mph. Calvin Grow reported that the Town had ordered two traffic study units (traffic “classifiers”) that are placed directly on the road surface and record volume, character and speed of all vehicles, while remaining essentially invisible to motorists. The Committee felt that use of these should be the first step in studies responding to speeding complaints, since the results of the Smart Trailer and Mike Bomgardner’s studies with his radar gun are always challenged as prompting slower speeds when they are recognized. Wes Thompson noted that with the Police Department’s new I.P. Lydar unit, they can show a speeder exactly how fast he or she was going and the unit isn’t tricked to respond to the densest vehicle in a crowd. He said that they could work with a community representative to demonstrate what the actual speed of the vehicle is, predictably considerably less than perceived by a pedestrian. The Committee asked that this be incorporated as the routine second step in a speed study and that Calvin Grow and Wes Thompson coordinate setting this up. Country Club Drive, S.W. will be re-evaluated once the classifiers are received.
6. *Temporary Traffic Circle System:* Mike Bomgardner and Calvin Grow reported that the manufacturer of the system provided estimates for their installation of these systems (Flexi-Guide 300 Curb System), since Tom Mason, Director of Engineering and Public Works, felt the workload presently borne by Town employees wouldn’t allow Town installation. The manufacturer will install no less than 250 linear feet per visit, which is the equivalent of three (3) large circles, at a minimum cost of \$13,125.00 to \$13,750.00 per installation. (To break them down and move to new locations

for future studies would likely involve yet another line item charge.) Liz Whiting felt that requests to be evaluated for circle installations would probably generate a waiting list of at least three locations at any given time, noting the Greenway Farms request and the recommendations for circles at the intersections of Catoctin Circle, N.E. at Marshall Drive, N.E. and North Street, N.E. Calvin Grow noted that the Town Council directed that the latter two circles be built as permanent installations with the Catoctin Circle, N.E., Queen Street, N.E. and Washington Street, N.E. improvements and that this should happen during the Fall of 2003. When Liz Whiting asked for the staff recommendation on acquiring the temporary systems, Calvin Grow suggested that the Committee come back to the question after reviewing the next agenda item.

7. *FY'03 Traffic Calming Projects (cost estimates):* Calvin Grow and Mike Bomgardner reviewed cost estimates (and assumptions) for the three projects requested at last month's meeting: *Squaring the corner at Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. and Catoctin Circle, N.E.:* \$12,697.22; *Landscaped island at Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. and Plaza Street, N.E.:* \$43,305.38 (includes drainage and extends the island all the way to Mayfair Drive, N.E.); and *Landscaped island at Northeast corner of Fairfax Street, N.E. at South King Street (Georgetown entry):* \$18,579.30. Liz Whiting noted that the Committee already had a \$6,000.00 to \$8,000.00 claim against the \$35,000.00 for the Clubhouse Drive, S.W. parking lane striping project, since there was not enough funds in last year's budget. Calvin Grow recommended that the Committee consider breaking the Edwards Ferry Road, N.E./Plaza Street, N.E. project into phases that could be funded over more than one year's budget and agreed that the Committee should try to sequence projects to allow the smoothest flow in completion. Wayne Henderson emphasized that the goal should be to get as many projects built as quickly as possible.

Liz Whiting suggested that considering acquisition of the temporary traffic circle units be delayed on the rationale that the permanent circles approved by the Council for the Northeast quadrant construction project will be the amenities that communities are aiming for and the temporary systems will then be warranted as tools permitting the study and qualification of locations for permanent installations. (See discussion in June, 2002 minutes.) After discussion, on a motion by Lyle Werner, seconded by Wayne Henderson, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Clubhouse Drive, S.W., Edwards Ferry Road, N.E./Catoctin Circle, N.E. and South King Street/Fairfax Street, N.E. projects be approved for construction from the FY '03 budget and that staff revisit the estimates to make sure that they can be delivered within the amount appropriated. Calvin Grow expressed concern that the Georgetown entry project hadn't been among the projects identified during the budget process. Liz Whiting noted, however, that it was among projects specifically mentioned in the original Task Force Report so it's not like it came out of left field. The Committee felt the best use of the budget

allocation was to get the three identified projects up and running this budget year.

8. *Appointments:* See item 2.
9. *Pedestrian safety campaign:* Carried over to the next meeting (September 16, 2002) since the first Monday in September is Labor Day.
10. *Election of Vice-Chair:* Wayne Henderson and Liz Whiting seconded the nomination of Ric Knight as Committee Vice Chairman. After no further nominations were offered, the Committee elected Ric Knight by acclamation.
11. *Evergreen Mill Road, S.E./Tolbert Lane, S.E.:* Andrew McClellan wrote Calvin Grow and Liz Whiting asking that this intersection be studied in light of existing traffic associated with the schools and increases anticipated with the opening of Heritage High School and Freedom Park. Mike Bomgardner's speed studies suggested that the present speed limit of 35 mph is appropriate. Calvin Grow noted that proffers for the Stratford development call for the installation of a traffic signal at the Stowers Lane, S.E. and Evergreen Mill Road intersection. Craig Lane asked why a traffic signal would be approved for an intersection currently functioning at level of service "A". Calvin Grow explained that the traffic studies done at the time of rezoning show the traffic signal and associated intersection improvements will be warranted. The Committee concurred with staff that there didn't appear to be a present need for Committee-recommended changes. Liz Whiting asked that Calvin Grow and Mike Bomgardner brief Andrew McClellan on these results.
12. *Meade Drive, S.W. all-way stop sign requests at Hague Drive, S.W. and Harle Place, S.W.:* Mike Bomgardner reported that his speed studies show average speeds of 27.1 mph which wouldn't warrant further study under the traffic calming program. Signs at these locations would also result in the stop signs being placed at closer intervals than the Task Force Report authorizes. Michelle Henning felt that Mike Bomgardner's results weren't representative of the true situation and Wes Thompson offered to meet with Ms. Henning to track speeds with the I.P. Lydar unit. The Committee also recommended follow-up studies once the classifiers are available.
13. *Sycolin Road, S.E. speed reduction:* Mike Bomgardner reported that his speed study indicated that the present 45 mph speed limit was appropriate. Liz Whiting noted the sight distance problems at the intersection of Tolbert Lane, S.E. and Lawson Road, S.E. The Committee asked for evaluations of the sight distances at both of the intersections along Sycolin Road, S.E. from the Route 7/15 By-Pass to the Town limits and also for accident records for these intersections. The request will be carried over to the September meeting.

14. *Kincaid Boulevard, S.E. speed increase:* Liz Whiting expressed surprise that the Council had referred this matter to the Committee after Craig Lane's appearance, since the Committee voted at the June meeting to back staff's recommendation of no change; however, Craig Lane's Town Council appearance came before our minutes were prepared and circulated. The Committee looked at the addendum Craig Lane presented to amplify his March request to the Council. Sandy Kane noted that the Kincaid Forest HOA had advertised the proposal to raise the speed limit for consideration at the meeting attended by Mr. Jackson, Wayne Henderson, Calvin Grow and Chief Joe Price and that no more than a half dozen residents endorsed it, which the HOA Board felt was an insufficient basis for recommending the change. She also noted the frequency of street intersections and community attractions along the road. She finally noted that the comparison to Battlefield Parkway was inappropriate, since it has always been intended to function as a major artery for through traffic, while Kincaid Boulevard, S.E. will still function primarily as a collector internal to the residential development. Indeed, Battlefield Parkway, N.E. east of the Route 7/15 By-Pass is posted for 25 mph south of Smartt's Lane, N.E. pending extension through to Edwards Ferry Road, N.E., which is consistent with the staff's position on Kincaid Boulevard, S.E.

On motion by Ric Knight, seconded by Lyle Werner, the Committee reiterated its recommendation that the speed limit for Kincaid Boulevard, S.E. remain at 25 mph at present. The Committee believes that an increase in the speed limit on a residential road should require the same community support as the Leesburg Residential Traffic Management Plan requires for traffic calming measures (75% of residents) intended to reduce traffic speed and that demonstration of community support for Mr. Craig Lane's request is lacking.

15. *New business:* (a) Lyle Werner raised a neighbor's question whether signs to the effect of "Caution—entering residential district" or "Cars backing into roadway" could be posted in the Georgetown neighborhood. Calvin Grow said he would investigate what the manual on Uniform of Traffic Controls Device Handbook permits. Liz Whiting noted that when Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. residents initially approached the Town Council regarding stop signs, they presented evidence that this situation prevails there too. Out of concern for "sign pollution" they looked to the gateway landscaped islands announcing entry into a residential neighborhood as an indirect inducement to lowering speed. They suggested that residents might want to await the effect of the project approved tonight (see item 7) before pursuing more signs. (b) Robin Boyer said that he was appearing on behalf of the Potomac Crossing HOA and asked who owns Balls Bluff Road, N.E. east of the Route 7/15 By-Pass, since it is not maintained and is an eye-sore. Liz Whiting questioned the goal, whether to get improved maintenance or get it vacated. Mr. Boyer indicated the latter. Calvin Grow said that the Veterans Administration owns

the road. The Committee suggested that Mr. Boyer contact Congressman Wolf's office for help.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, September 16, 2002. Staff is to contact Liz Whiting if anything arises needing Committee consideration in the interim.